

Northern Voluntary Jazz Promoters Network: Promoter Roadshows Grants for the Arts Project Proposal

1 You and your work

- **What you want to do.**

The Northern Voluntary Jazz Promoters Network (NorVolJazz) is an open group of jazz promoters operating across the North of England who programme regular professional jazz events. Our aim is to develop and strengthen this network by addressing skill gaps and providing professional development in a number of areas (identified as weaknesses through research) to achieve sustainability and long-term benefit to the infrastructure of jazz in the North.

With this bid, we want to create a series of CPD Roadshows for the promoters to attend, with visiting specialists giving direct practical and strategic advice and guidance in each of the following identified areas:

- 1: Fundraising (especially grants, friends schemes, other charitable fundraising)
- 2: Education (links to schools and Music Education Hubs)
- 3: Audience development (what attracts cautious listeners, audience analytics)
- 4: Marketing (websites, creating human interest stories, using press and social media)

Although the individuals and clubs that make up the network are run voluntarily by a diverse base of individuals, ranging from postgraduates to retired enthusiasts, the programming expertise and levels of activity demonstrate a track record of the utmost professionalism, and in many cases it could be argued that they are solely responsible for sustaining the live jazz scene in their respective geographical areas.

Initially, the group stemmed from the varied pool of Yorkshire jazz promoters, many of whom received ACE subsidy indirectly via Jazz Yorkshire's promoter support scheme. Since the demise of Jazz Yorkshire in September 2012, the group have joined forces with similar promoters in the NW and NE to examine, with guidance from Jazz North, the potential for garnering alternate streams of support, both financial and practical. This will enable the promoters to both optimise on sharing resources and outputs, and become more independently sustainable, resilient and equipped with the skills to develop their activities in ways which will help each of them engage newer and broader audiences.

New members with a commitment to jazz promotion across the north, primarily via the voluntary/not-for-profit sector, are encouraged to join the network at any point. Regular promoter meetings are spread across the entire northern area.

- **The names, skills and experience of the artists and other main people involved.**

NorVolJazz is a rich, highly-experienced collective with a pooled experience of 199 years' promoting. Many (e.g. Wigan Jazz Club, Wakefield Jazz, Sheffield Jazz) have

been operating successfully for over 20 years, and the group embraces every type of promotion ranging from concert settings featuring touring UK and international artists to cutting-edge emerging young players in rooms above urban bars. Collectively, the network presents over 400 events a year. Each plays a vital role in contributing to the vibrant, diverse and distinctive jazz scene in the North which is the envy of other areas of England.

The group currently consists of 25 individual promoters from the Yorkshire, NE and NW regions. Please see the attached appendix for a detailed list. From these, a small steering group was nominated by NorVolJazz to research and develop a bid and determine a realistic activity plan.

This Steering Group consists of the following individuals:

- Steve Crocker: ex-Sheffield Jazz and current Seven Jazz (Leeds) promoter, musician, volunteer co-ordinator
- Kim Macari: professional jazz musician and teacher, co-ordinates year-round gigs and workshops for *Jazz At Heart*, Leeds
- Jez Matthews/Jude Sacker (job-share): Sheffield Jazz promoters and musicians.
- Gill Wilde: Grimsby Jazz and Cleethorpes Jazz Festival
- Steve Mead (Jazz North/Manchester Jazz Festival) chairs the meetings in a non-executive capacity.

Although the Steering Group is Yorkshire-biased, this initial selection of members is a direct reflection of the origins of the network: i.e. the Yorkshire Voluntary Promoters. As the network is steadily widening its remit and embracing NW and NE promoters, the Steering Group will reflect its demographics appropriately. The role of the Steering Group is to represent the wider interests of all the promoters that form part of NorVolJazz (rather than to represent their own individual clubs); the group therefore has a wider and longer-term entity of its own, beyond the scope of this GftA bid. Make up of the Steering Group is reviewed periodically and always includes the NorVolJazz chair, treasurer or secretary, in order to provide continuity between the Steering Group and wider network. Geographical representation across the north, diversity and capacity are taken into consideration when forming the group.

• **The aims of the activity and how you will achieve them.**

Support is urgently required to offer the group badly-needed guidance in specific identified skills gaps, so that jazz promotion across the north can move forward in a sustainable, exciting and robust way. The group also wishes to consolidate itself in order to work as a singular body with Jazz North to broaden audiences for jazz across the area. We will achieve these aims by providing a meaningful programme of engaging CPD presentations that can all be put into practice and monitored.

- **How this activity fits in with your current work and its future development.**

This activity represents a progression in NorVolJazz's work. We want to build on the initial functions currently positively achieved by the network as a means of communication between promoters and to assert ourselves as a professional body which can adapt and become an integral part of the jazz scene in the north and the UK. Through this activity, such a unified body will be in a better place to engage with organisations such as Jazz North, in pursuit of a strengthened, cohesive northern jazz scene.

The activity will run from April 2013 to April 2014. This bid is the first part of longer-term developmental activity, the second part of which will follow on from evaluation of this activity and focus on a detailed plan of artistic activity and audience development initiatives. A small fee for a Strategic Director has been included in our budget to inform our plans for this second-stage work. Those plans will also include consideration of appropriate options for subsidising the work, be it via earned income, contributions, private giving, bids to foundations, GftA or Strategic Touring. In formulating our plans, reference has been made to relevant audience research already commissioned, to build upon findings and avoid duplication: e.g. by Jazz Services (*Jazz in England – High Quality, Best Value and the Voluntary Sector*, 2010) EMJazz (*Getting Bigger Audiences for Jazz*, 2009) and Morris Hargreaves MacIntyre (*How to Develop Audiences for Jazz. Or Die*, 2000).

We have also examined other available services, workshops and surgeries to avoid duplication, such as those run by Making Music and Create. However, it is not particularly easy for network members to participate in such sporadic CPD programmes due to commitments to their day jobs and other time constraints over and above their promotional duties, which are already carried out in voluntary capacities. Hence our activity is compacted into intensified periods to maximise on participation. This Roadshow is a workable concept which could be rolled out as an efficient model for use in other contexts and to other promoters.

- **How the activity is likely to affect the people who experience it, or how it will affect the arts more widely.**

Given that the promoters have consistently worked voluntarily to enrich the jazz scenes in their own districts, none are in a position to undertake routine professional development training in areas where there is severe need. Without development of these identified skills and resources, many of the promoters in the group would simply disappear, and with it the jazz scene in the north would shrivel to leave only the few existing major festivals and venues to deliver either intensified or occasional provision for audiences. Such a fragmented picture of jazz provision is a prospect which all parties wish to avoid, but in order to complement the network's passion and enthusiasm, we need to equip the members of the group with the skills - and desire - to build resilience in these challenging times.

2 How the public engage with your work

- **Details about the people the activity will reach (for example, the audiences or people taking part), stating whether these people would not normally engage with the arts (see our information sheet ‘Public engagement’).**

Please see attached Appendix: NorVolJazz Members.

The work in this proposal will initially reach the 25 members of NorVolJazz. Of these, only three (Grimsby, Wakefield and Sheffield) have previously successfully secured direct ACE subsidy via Grants for the Arts, mainly for programmes of work, research and/or equipment. Part of this activity will develop promoters’ skills at building relationships with the arts funding system – historically these relationships have been underdeveloped due to lack of resources, time, knowledge and a certain amount of wariness.

Many of the promoters operate in post-code areas with low arts provision for audiences and low levels of subsidised support for arts organisations (ACE-funded and otherwise) – e.g. Cleethorpes, Grimsby, Haslingden, Scarborough and Sheffield.

- **Details of how you will reach people and details of your press and marketing activities.**

The promoters who will initially be participating in the activity are already identified, but it is anticipated that as word of the programme spreads throughout the jazz sector, several additional participants may wish to come on board to benefit from the Roadshows. This can easily be accommodated; their financial contribution will also strengthen the project budget. It is an additional ambition for NorVolJazz to share best practice, problem solving and information dissemination within its members – a practice that is currently only achieved to a minor degree. Communications across the network will also be examined as part of the activities, to ascertain the best methods of keeping all promoters in touch with each other.

- **If there is no immediate chance of engaging people (for example, some research and development activities), details of how you think you could engage the public in the future.**

This activity is not aimed directly at audiences, but rather it targets known promoters with a track record of success and the potential to grow. The long term aim is to increase the number and types of people attending live jazz and to develop new locations for the music where the potential for reaching new jazz audiences exists but is currently under-explored – e.g. via closer collaboration with the Rural Touring Network. Skills and insights gained throughout the activity will help promoters achieve these ambitions.

- **If your activity is for developing new audiences and marketing give details of the target audience you want to reach and why they are important to you.**

The primary long-term aim of the work is to equip the promoters with information and techniques to bring new audiences in to their venues. Young people and families are a

particular target group, since these are generally under-represented at many club-type environments and they are viewed as the potential audiences of the future. The network is in need of expertise in digital media and social networking tools – channels through which many younger listeners receive information. A number of promoters in the network have made in-roads into reaching new target audiences via local Music Education Hubs; Seven Jazz have also targeted migrant communities by linking their jazz offer at Seven Arts Leeds with presentations featuring Asian and Afro-Caribbean musical styles. The impacts and further potential of these initiatives will be explored via the activities in this proposal.

3 Making it happen

- **How far you have got with your planning.**

Initial consultation across NorVolJazz was carried out by the Steering Group to identify where skills gaps existed and where there were clear needs, as listed in Section 1.

We have devised a programme of activity (see below) which we believe addresses these concerns and allows for maximum participation by those in the network. A wish-list of key speakers has been drawn up, although none have yet been contracted for any of the work. A timetable has been drawn up and suitable venues identified.

- **How you will manage the main stages of your activity, and what each stage contains.**

These Roadshows will be delivered in 2 stages, each consisting of day-long sessions split into the four priority areas as identified by our preliminary research. Each Roadshow will take place twice across the north to maximise on possibilities for all promoters to attend (e.g. Newcastle and Southport). They will be timed to coincide with major jazz events in the hosting areas to encourage full attendance (e.g. Gateshead International Jazz Festival, Marsden Jazz Festival etc).

75 minutes will be allocated to each topic, which will include Q&A informed by promoters' issues which have been submitted to the speakers in advance.

Proposed Timetable for each of the 4 Roadshow days	
10.00	Arrival, light refreshments
10.30 – 11.45	Session 1
11.45 – 1.00	Session 2
1.00 – 1.45	Lunch
1.45 – 3.00	Session 3
3.00 – 3.15	Tea break
3.15 – 4.30	Session 4
4.30 – 5.00	Wrap-up/plenary session

Location and Timing of Roadshows			
Roadshow 1	The Bridge, Newcastle	April 2013	Gateshead International Jazz Festival
	Royal Clifton Hotel, Southport	April/May 2013	Southport Melodic Jazz
Roadshow 2	The Gregson, Lancaster	September 2013	Lancaster Jazz Festival
	Marsden Mechanics Hall	October 2013	Marsden Jazz Festival

Should any of the above not be possible, other potential area festivals include: Keswick, Cleethorpes, Wigan, Manchester and Hull. A limited discretionary accommodation allowance has been allocated for those unable to make return travel in one day.

We have identified several key speakers to lead the sessions. These are tailored to the sector and to the requirements of the network, and provide a collated breadth of expertise not readily available elsewhere:

- Sandra Nicholls-Marcy (The Social Jazz), expert on social media marketing strategies for jazz musicians;
- Heather Maitland (Research Associate at the Centre for Cultural Policy Studies at the University of Warwick), author of specialist audience research projects for Jazz Services and EM-Jazz;
- Professor Douglas Brownlie (University of Stirling) – marketing approaches to the Scottish jazz scene
- Representatives from the Sheffield and Manchester Music Education Hubs
- Janet Dunnett (freelance arts consultant and fundraiser, chair of Manchester Jazz Festival, ex-Arts & Business) fundraising from the private sector and individual giving
- Charlotte Platt (Dixon Raines, Russell Platt Associates), freelance arts fundraiser
- Jeremy Hall (Chairman and Managing Director), Dean Clough

Kim Macari has been appointed by the Steering Group as project co-ordinator.

Responsible to the Steering Group, duties will include (but are not limited to):

- Overseeing the project
- Contacting and contracting key speakers
- Booking venues to host the Roadshow events
- Organising catering and other arrangements
- Managing the project budget
- Communicating with all NorVolJazz promoters
- Being first point of contact for all enquiries from promoters, speakers and ACE
- Managing follow-up consultations with the promoters; gathering information throughout the project
- Carrying out continual monitoring of project activity and ensuring that any monitoring and evaluation documentation is being distributed, collated and interpreted
- Writing the final report

- **Your past experience of successfully managing a similar activity.**

The members of the network have a vast amount of experience in managing venues, festivals, concert programmes, workshops, volunteer teams, meetings and collaborating with external partner organisations. The project will benefit from this pooled experience as NorVolJazz embarks upon this new venture, which in itself seeks to improve upon the work and knowledge of the network.

Additionally, many of the voluntary promoters bring skills and experience from their 'day-jobs': e.g. Jean Watson (Seven Jazz) is a Leeds businesswoman who also has experience of charity fundraising; Jez Matthews (Sheffield Jazz) is an IT consultant who has worked with Capgemini and British Steel.

- **If your application is for developing an organisation describe how you currently manage your work, and include your business plan (if you have one).**

NorVolJazz itself is currently an unincorporated association; member promoters that make up the network have a range of working methods and constitutions, with a few of them being limited companies and/or charities. The development of a Business Plan is a priority for the second stage of the work and will be informed by the findings that arise from the activity in this proposal.

4 Finance

The budget section of the application form gives us most of the information we need to carry out our financial assessment. For all applications, you must tell us the following.

- **How you have worked out the figures in your budget.**

Fees for the guest speakers are pitched according to their track record and level of time and commitment required of their contribution, with appropriate associated expenses; catering for the events has been modestly but realistically allocated; travel subsidy for promoters' attendance has been calculated on an average of £50 per promoter for each Roadshow; a small discretionary promoter accommodation allowance has been allocated; remuneration for the project co-ordinator is set at £10 p.h. to a maximum of £1000 (100 hours) over the 12 month activity plan. Other administrative costs have been set at nominal levels.

- **Your approach to raising as much money as you can from other sources, what other sources of funding you have applied for, and the progress of any other applications you have made for funding.**

13 of the member promoters have so far committed to contributing £100, providing at least £1,300 of matching cash income. This amount may well rise once work on the project delivery commences.

The activities will benefit from the various in-kind relationships which are prevalent throughout the network: e.g. venue partnerships for the hosting locations of the Roadshows. Although not reflected in this budget, Jazz North is also making a nominal financial contribution to the maintenance of the bi-monthly NorVolJazz meetings at which the progress of this project will be reviewed.

- **Any effect the activity will have on your long-term financial position.**

The activity will help grow NorVolJazz into a more cohesive group, working together purposefully on strands of development. Establishing working relationships with other organisations will put the network and its individual members in a better position to strengthen its financial sustainability via a variety of income streams. Since the level of financial activity within the network is currently very low (in terms of it acting as a single entity), we will address any future increase in workload in this area when the need arises. We would expect the activities in this proposal to eventually result in increased audiences for individual promoters, bringing with it the associated extra box office income, which would be managed by existing systems.

- **How you will manage the budget and your cash flow. (This will help you to monitor how well your income covers your spending.)**

All members of NorVolJazz have extensive experience in managing transactions, budgets and cashflow in their ongoing work as promoters. NorVolJazz has its own bank account with two signatories. The project co-ordinator will monitor transactions and ensure that activity stays within budget.

5 Evaluation

A plenary session will be planned for presentation at Leeds International Jazz Conference, at Leeds College of Music, March 2014, at which successful NorVolJazz case studies will illustrate the challenges and benefits of the project, and next steps for the network will be examined.

Evaluation will be reviewed at Steering Group meetings and at NorVolJazz promoter meetings throughout the duration of this activity.

Our evaluation will include:

- Distributing (anonymous) simple questionnaires to promoters and guest speakers following each session
- Maintaining records of attendances and finances
- Encouraging discussion to ensure that everyone is contributing
- Encouraging dialogue at each session about how to move to the next phase
- Holding regular planning meetings for NorVolJazz, the steering group and individual promoters
- Monitoring activities to ensure that they are on track to meet the ambitions set out in section 1, taking remedial action where necessary.